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SUBJECT: AVIAN INFLUENZA: DUTCH FIND LOW PATHOGENIC AI

¶1. (U) The Ministry of Agriculture announced on August 1 that low pathogenic avian influenza (AI) was discovered during routine sampling of a chicken farm in Voorthuizen. Voorthuizen, located in the center of the Netherlands, is situated in the middle of the main egg producing area of the country. Low pathogenic AI is a problem for poultry producers, but is not as destructive to flocks as other strains of AI, and is not considered to pose any threat to humans. Low pathogenic strains can, however, mutate into high pathogenic strains, which can be lethal for humans. The virus found on the farm is an H7 subtype of AI, and not the H5N1 strain that has been found in a number of EU Member States.

¶2. (U) While the discovered AI strain is not deemed to pose a major risk at present, the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality has placed the affected farm under quarantine and will cull all the chickens on the farm. It has also taken samples from five other poultry farms situated within a one kilometer radius of the infected farm to determine if the AI virus spread. The Dutch have also prohibited transport of live birds, eggs (for breeding or consumption), farm waste and manure within, into or out of the region within a three kilometer radius of the affected farm.

¶3. (U) According the Animal Disease Notification System of the European Commission (http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/animal/diseases/adns/index_en.htm), six cases of low pathogenic avian influenza in poultry have been reported in the EU between January and July 2006. During the same period, 660 cases of high pathogenic avian influenza were reported in the EU, of which 183 cases were in domestic poultry and 477 cases were in wild birds.

Blakeman